

Bridging Human and Health Services Across Climate Justice

Community Meeting Focus Groups

The climate justice exploratory meetings include semi-structured focus groups with community leaders to identify community strengths, gaps (in capacity, knowledge, partnerships), and opportunities for improved resource coordination in climate resilience and adaptation. This is a collaborative approach between health and human services and highlights a new avenue in inter-agency collaboration between the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health (OASH) and the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

Purpose and use of information: The information collected will help inform an adaptation plan with the ACF and ensure that federal resources are accessible and responsive to identified community needs as related to environmental justice and the impacts of climate change on local communities.

Privacy: The information provided will be combined with that of other respondents and discussed internally among the contract team and with federal staff within ACF. Descriptive information about programs may be included in summaries, but no individuals' identifying information will be provided publicly to the extent permitted by law.

Voluntary Participation: Providing information for the purposes described is voluntary.

Estimated time: Each focus group is expected to take one and a half hours (90 minutes). There will be two focus groups held at each of five meetings in different locations.

- Total community meetings: 5
- Total public participants: 150 (30 per meeting)
- Total focus group time: 15 hours (2 sessions at 90 minutes each * 5 meetings)
- Total participant time: 450 hours (150 participants * 3 hours)

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Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 3 hours (180 minutes) per respondent in a group setting of 30 respondents per session. This time allowance includes time for reviewing objectives, gathering information, and reviewing the collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

COMMUNITY MEETING CONVERSATION PROTOCOL

Participant Characteristics

A compilation of invitees from ACF funding recipients, community programs, and collaborators. Participants are those who work locally across a broad spectrum of human service and community well-being issues from a variety of agencies.

Introduction

Facilitator introduces self and any team members, reviews ground rules with participants, and asks for participants' brief personal background.

- Thank you for joining today's meeting. My name is _____ and my company has been contracted by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to conduct two focus group sessions as part of today's community gathering.
- The purpose of these focus groups is to better understand your community's environmental and climate justice issues; recognize how existing health and human service programs addresses these concerns; identify possible gaps in existing programs, activities, and policies; and identify possible partnership with other local, state, and Federal government and non-governmental organizations.
- Let's review some focus group ground rules:
 - Your participation is voluntary, and you have the right to stop speaking or participating at any time. If your facilitator asks any questions you do not wish to answer, you do not have to respond.
 - There are no wrong answers here; we just want to know what you think.
 - Unless anyone objects, we will audio-record the meeting today. The recordings will only be used to confirm our notes and allow us to revisit this conversation. Additional project staff may hear the tapes at a later date. However, your name and personal information will be removed from any quotes and will not be used in any of our summaries.
 - This conversation is entirely focused on environmental justice and climate change concerns, resources, or gaps in addressing said issues in your community.
 - We will have about 90 minutes for our discussion. We will break the discussion into two parts with a break in between.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?
- Please introduce yourself, your work, and, if applicable, how you engage with to climate change or environmental justice issues in your community.

Session 1: Question Bank

Topic 1: Identification of communities' environmental and climate concerns and issues

1. What are some key environmental concerns in your community? How are they impacting the most vulnerable members of your community?
2. What are the most serious climate-related concerns your community is facing? How are they impacting the most vulnerable members of your community?
 - *Prompt: What about climate related disasters?*
3. What are the most important health needs or human services needs in your community?
4. Are these environmental and climate change concerns impacting the health and human services provided in your community?

Topic 2: Existing local, state, and federal government programs (and those non-government organization programs supported with government funds) and activities.

5. What are some of the successful efforts, partnerships or projects already in your community to address these issues?
6. Are federal, state, local, (tribal and territorial as appropriate) government agencies supporting your community or your programs in address these concerns?
7. Do you know of any local, state, tribal, federal, or other government health and human services programs that address the issues that you mentioned earlier? If so, please describe how these programs are helping your community.
8. If there are federal, state, local (tribal and territorial) service programs that address the issues you mentioned earlier do you have experience working with any of these programs or services? If so, have past experiences addressed issues in your community?
 - *Prompt: Do you have ideas of how they could further address the issues discussed above?*
9. Are there any tools or resources you have used to identify environment or climate risks, community vulnerabilities and hazards?
10. Are you aware of success stories or lessons learned on how federal programs may have successfully addressed health and human services concerns in communities vulnerable to climate change or environmental injustices? If so, please describe the experience.

Session 2: Question Bank

Topic 3: Gaps in existing programs, activities, and activities

11. What are your experiences when collaborating with government agencies on environmental justice and/or climate change planning?
12. What major challenges, gaps, or barriers have you encountered while working toward addressing environmental justice and climate change issues?
 - *Prompt: Are there actions that ACF or other agencies can take to minimize the barriers/challenges?*
13. Do you think there are gaps in government programs or policies that could better address the environmental justice and climate change issues in your community? If so, please describe the gaps.

Topic 4: Moving towards solutions (Partners and Resources)

14. Do you see a role for human service providers in dealing with environmental justice issues in your community?
15. How do you think human service providers should be involved in climate change planning in your community?
 - *Probe: Is there any specific knowledge or skills that the providers should be aware of or possess to be effectively involved in climate change planning in your community?*
16. What other organizations (governmental or non-government) could ACF work with to address the environmental justice and climate change concerns discussed earlier?
17. What other organizations, entities, or authorities do you think your community (or government agency) could work with to advance solutions around these issues?
18. Thinking about all the successful programs and efforts on a variety of topics and issues shared today—how can these efforts be better connected and better collaborate?
 - *Probe: [Facilitator: please share specific programs and efforts previously shared to gather input from participants]*
19. What opportunities do you see to leverage efforts with other programs, efforts, and partners in this room or that have been referenced in discussion today?
 - *Probe: [Facilitator: please use the same list shared previously to gather input from participants]*
20. What suggestions would you provide to ACF and other federal agencies on how they can better address environmental justice and climate change concerns in disadvantaged communities?

Conclusion and closing remarks after the end of both sessions. [Thank the participants for joining the conversation and ask for any final comments or ideas] (10 min)

Before we leave, just a few last questions:

- What did you learn today that you didn't already know?
- Do you feel as if you have made connections with other community organizations today that may foster a relationship to continue addressing these issues in your community?
- Are there any final comments you would like to share to ensure that everything you hoped to bring forward during this meeting is captured?

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, AND FOR SHARING YOUR EXPERTISE WITH US.
WE'RE GRATEFUL YOU WERE ABLE TO JOIN US TODAY.**